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LYRICS OF  
BROTHERHOOD

RICHARD BURTON

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LYRICS  
OF BROTHERHOOD



# LYRICS OF BROTHERHOOD

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RICHARD BURTON



BOSTON  
LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD  
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1899



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## Lyrics of Brotherhood





## BLACK SHEEP

FROM their folded mates they wander far,  
Their ways seem harsh and wild;  
They follow the beck of a baleful star,  
Their paths are dream-beguiled.

Yet haply they sought but a wider range,  
Some loftier mountain-slope,  
And little recked of the country strange  
Beyond the gates of hope.

And haply a bell with a luring call  
Summoned their feet to tread  
Midst the cruel rocks, where the deep pitfall  
And the lurking snare are spread.

Maybe, in spite of their tameless days  
Of outcast liberty,  
They're sick at heart for the homely ways  
Where their gathered brothers be.

And oft at night, when the plains fall dark  
And the hills loom large and dim,  
For the Shepherd's voice they mutely hark,  
And their souls go out to him.

Meanwhile, "Black sheep! Black sheep!" we  
cry,  
Safe in the inner fold;  
And maybe they hear, and wonder why,  
And marvel, out in the cold.

“THE MORN IS FINE”

THE morn is fine, the wind smells sweet ;  
The nomad man that lurks in me  
Arouses, and I fain would meet  
The fellowship of vagrancy

Along the mountain roads of day.  
Hail, foot-farers from near and far ;  
Ye who do love the wandering way  
Of Beauty, show what stuff ye are,

And face the westward-luring path :  
The hours are yours 'twixt dawn and night ;  
And since that Youth's sure aftermath  
Is Memory — use the day aright,

That by the fire, when evening's here,  
Your cronies gathered close around,  
The old-time deeds may twinkle clear,  
And peace be in the back-log's sound.



## THE WORLD PLAY

(“AND ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN MERELY  
PLAYERS”)

THE entrance-price you willy-nilly pay,  
Sit with your kind, take pleasure, if you may,  
Or puzzle at the meaning of the play.

### *Comedy*

The humors of the time, the painted show  
Of character, the Attic salt of wit ;  
Now, laughter lifts it high, now, tender woe  
For a pale moment o'er the stage must flit,  
To make the main plot merrier ; maids and men  
Teach life is sweet and love may come again.

### *Melodrama*

See how the swashbucklers swagger !  
Hark to the villain's dark cry !  
Much is a-doing and many are ruing.  
Innocents, destined to die,  
Haply, with thrust of a dagger.  
Evil frustrate and virtue tried and true,  
Romance, adventure, sleight, and derring-do,  
The earth's wide passions served up hot for you !

### *Farce*

See the buffoon's fat cheeks ballooning out !  
Thwack ! the lath sword descends, guffaws are  
rife  
'Midst gallery gods, with many a boorish shout  
Of approbation. Yet, 'tis part of life,

*The  
World  
Play*

And honest too, — the grammarless, crude heart  
Of one's own kinsmen, and this stir-about  
Is wholesome, though it lack the soul of art.

*Tragedy*

Slow evolution to a fateful close ;  
Deepest of dramas knocking at our soul ;  
Glints of the gay, but gloom that spreads and  
grows  
Towards some sardonic end, the gruesome goal  
Of all the light, the motion, and the glee  
Pranked out high-heartedly.  
Behind man's quest and woman's sacrifice,  
Bravery and risk and lure of ardent eyes,  
Quieting the stir,  
Mingling mould-odors with love's sweetest myrrh,  
Forever looms and glooms the sepulchre !

*Epilogue*

Great Watcher of the whole, the motley shift  
Of play and counterplay, sole Critic, who  
Must understand, because Creator too ;  
Prompter and playwright both : the curtains lift  
And fall, while joy and sorrow interweave ;  
We know full well what time to smile or grieve,  
No more ; the ultimate meaning's shut from view.  
The world-play act by act moves on, and we  
Are shaken by its moods, — mirth, anguish,  
mystery.

## THE HUMAN TOUCH

**H**IGH thoughts and noble in all lands  
Help me; my soul is fed by such.

But ah, the touch of lips and hands, —

The human touch !

Warm, vital, close, life's symbols dear, —

These need I most, and now, and here.

## NOSTALGIA

ALL through their lives men build or dream  
    them homes,

Longing for peace and quiet and household  
    love ;

All through their lives — though offering heca-  
    tombs

To worldly pleasures and the shows thereof.

And at the last, life-sick, with still the same

Unconquerable desire within their breast,

They yearn for heaven and murmur its dear name,

Deeming it, more than mortal homes are, blest.

## OLD SONGS

THERE is many a simple song one hears,  
To an outworn tune, that starts the tears ;  
Not for itself — for the buried years.

Perchance 'twas heard in the days of youth,  
When breath was buoyant and words were truth ;  
When joys were peddled at Life's gay booth.

Or maybe it sounded along a lane  
Where She walked with you — and now again  
You catch Love's cadence, Love's old sweet pain.

Or else it stole through a room where lay  
A dear one dying, and seemed to say :  
“ Love and death, they shall pass away.”

It rises out of the Long Ago,  
And that is the reason it shakes you so  
With pain and passion and buried woe.

There is many a simple song that brings  
From deeps of living, on viewless wings,  
The tender magic of bygone things.

## THE FOREFATHER

**H**ERE at the country inn,  
I lie in my quiet bed,  
And the ardent onrush of armies  
Throbs and throbs in my head.

Why, in this calm, sweet place,  
Where only silence is heard,  
Am I 'ware of the crash of conflict —  
Is my blood to battle stirred ?

Without, the night is blessed  
With the smell of pines, with stars ;  
Within, is the mood of slumber,  
The healing of daytime scars.

'Tis strange — yet I am thrall  
To epic agonies :  
The tumult of myriads dying  
Is borne to me on the breeze.

Mayhap in the long ago  
My forefather grim and stark  
Stood in some hell of carnage,  
Faced forward, fell in the dark ;

And I, who have always known  
Peace, with her dove-like ways,  
Am gripped by his martial spirit  
Here in the after days.

I cannot rightly tell :  
I lie, from all stress apart,  
And the ardent onrush of armies  
Surges hot through my heart.

*The  
Forefather*

## TO-MORROW AND TO-DAY

**T**O-MORROW hath a rare, alluring sound ;  
To-day is very prose ; and yet the twain  
Are but one vision seen through altered eyes.  
Our dreams inhabit one ; our stress and pain  
Surge through the other. Heaven is but to-day  
Made lovely with to-morrow's face, for aye.



## THE POLAR QUEST

UNCONQUERABLY, men venture on the  
quest

And seek an ocean amplitude unsailed,  
Cold, virgin, awful. Scorning ease and rest,  
And heedless of the heroes who have failed,  
They face the ice floes with a dauntless zest.

The polar quest ! Life's offer to the strong !  
To pass beyond the pale, to do and dare,  
Leaving a name that stirs us like a song,  
And making captive some strange Otherwhere,  
Though grim the conquest, and the labor long.

Forever courage kindles, faith moves forth  
To find the mystic floodway of the North.

## WAR NOTES

### I FALSE PEACE AND TRUE

**T**HERE is a peace wherein man's mood is  
tame —

Like clouds upon a windless summer day  
The hours float by ; the people take no shame  
In alien mocks ; like children are they gay.  
Such peace is craven-bought, the cost is great ;  
Not so is nourished a puissant state.

There is a peace amidst the shock of arms  
That satisfies the soul, though all the air  
Hurttles with horror and is rude with harms ;  
Life's gray gleams into golden deeds, and  
*And* where,  
~~The~~ while swords slept, unrighteousness was  
done,  
Wrong takes her death-blow, and from sun to  
sun  
That clarion cry *My Country!* makes men one.

### II "EXTRAS"

**T**HE crocuses in the Square  
Lend a winsome touch to the May ;  
The clouds are vanished away,  
The weather is bland and fair ;  
Now peace seems everywhere.  
Hark to the raucous, sullen cries :  
" Extra ! Extra ! " — tersely flies  
The news, and a great hope mounts, or dies.

About the bulletin-boards  
Dark knots of people surge ;  
Strained faces show, then merge  
In the inconspicuous hordes  
That yet are the Nation's lords.  
“ Extra ! Extra ! Big fight at sea ! ”  
Was the luck with us ? Is it victory ?  
Dear God, they died for you and me !

Meanwhile the crocuses down the street  
With heaven's own patience are calm and sweet

### III PRO PATRIA MORI

**A**S a gold and scarlet sunset  
Glories a sombre day,  
That else were all unmemoried,  
Dying in dusk away :

Great acts man's day emblazon,  
God's lilies out of life's mud ;  
The splendid flower of heroes  
Out of a soil of blood.

The date of the deed ? Who recks it ?  
Such moments are timeless things.  
Of old, Leonidas thrills us,  
He travels on Fame's wide wings ;

Or, blithe through the Russian bullets,  
Rushes the Light Brigade  
To death — and the whole world echoes  
The sound of the charge they made.

And now, — with the ancient valor, —  
In the clutch of a tropic sun,  
Our own Rough Riders conquer,  
Though the foe be four to one.

The date of the deed ? 'Tis nothing !  
Count it by tears or cheers.  
For the men who die for Country  
Have naught to do with the years !

#### IV PARADES

##### *Civic Display*

THE uniforms gleam bright, and bands galore  
Play up the feet that step in time full gay ;  
This soldiering looks handsome ; hark, the roar  
That rends the very skies of Spring to-day  
From mobile multitudes who line the way.  
Behold the grace and gallantry of war !

##### *The Return of the Veterans*

Beneath grey gloom they tramp along : their tread  
Lacks rhythm ; faded, soiled, and torn their  
dress ;  
They wot of storm and peril, wounds that bled,  
And pains beyond imagination's guess.  
The lookers-on, struck mute by tenderness,  
Hardly huzza : it is as if the dead  
Walked with the quick, Beneath a brooding  
sky  
The bronzed and battered veterans limp by.

THE uses of adversity are sweet :  
Red war, the lust of conquest is forgot ;  
Beneath bland skies a nation stays her feet,  
To laud the hero, grace his sleeping-spot ;  
For every drop of blood old swords have let,  
The rose, the lily, and the violet.

## THE SPHINX

WHAT is her silence saying,  
As she peers from her stony eyes,  
Creature of massive sternness,  
Woman of monstrous size ?

Ever the ages ask it  
Of the Deity of the Sands,  
And the Spirit of Egypt answers,  
The ancient one of the lands :

“ Drought is my old-time menace,  
Rain brings my happy while,  
I blossom forth like a garden  
With the flooding of the Nile.

“ It means good grain for my people,  
Yea, life for my maids and men ;  
My kings in their great hewn sepulchres,  
E'en they grow joyful then.

“ In the Sign of the Lion stately,  
In the Sign of the Virgin too,  
Do the waters come upwelling,  
And the fields turn fair to view.

“ So of old my servants builded  
The Sphinx; she rose amain,  
A shape half beast, half human,  
Above the burning plain ;

“ For a sure, eternal token  
Of reverence and praise,  
A sacrifice to Father Nile  
Done in the elder days.

“ And if, in Time’s later lapses,  
Innumerable aliens come  
To guess at her mystic semblance,  
And her front seems riddlesome,

“ My race will comprehend her,  
Their goddess, and laud her high  
In her worship of the waters  
Beneath a rainless sky.”

## CITIES OF ELD

**I**N the Orient uplands afar,  
Beyond the roof of the world,  
Strange buried cities are,  
Where over the winds have whirled  
And the Sky's bleak stormings swirled  
For century-sweeps of time.  
They lie deep hid in the slime,  
Or frore in their ancient shroud,  
Careless of clear or cloud, —  
But dimly imagined of man.

There once the opulent East,  
With sumptuous caravan  
And blithe bazar and feast,  
Rejoiced in the gifts of life ;  
And love allured, and strife  
Was wine to the conquering strong.  
There women with ardent eyes  
Drew souls to sacrifice,  
And the day of work seemed long  
Till it brought the night of rest,  
When the instruments of the dance  
Made the hours a happy trance ;  
And jewels were thrown to the best  
In wit or story or song.

The silver of temple bells  
Clove through the sunset gold,  
Or else, in these cities old,  
Called the early to prayer,



When the swart, unhurrying throng  
Paced to their altars there ;  
The splendid pillars upsoared  
Circled with painted scenes  
From the midst of the forest greens ;  
And marbled fountains plashed  
And swords processional flashed,  
When the gaping crowds stood fast,  
Beholding some mighty lord  
Go by, with his pomp of state.

Alas, for the fall of fate !  
Look ! there is nothing there ;  
Listen ! no sound is heard,  
Save haply a vagrant bird  
Or a wind-wail, or the blare  
Of thunder ; — there is no worth  
Of merchandise, no mirth,  
No lyric word of love ;  
Great, savage seams of earth  
Cover the marks thereof.  
'Tis only but now and then  
That venturesome modern men  
Set forth on a hard-won quest  
From the fresher world of the West,  
To stand in that silent Vast  
And remember them of the Past.  
'Tis scarcely more than a dream,  
This olden worship and lust,  
This fragrance smothered in rust,  
This beauty of transient gleam ;

*Cities of Eld*

A symphony sunk to a moan,  
A famine after a feast ;  
The most are like to the least ;  
The towers are razed, are prone,  
Yea, all of the folk are dust  
And even their gods unknown.

## A CHOPIN PRELUDE

A CERTAIN Chopin prelude once I heard.  
Strive as I may to tell, no mortal word  
Can all-express that music. Like a bird  
My soul went up the blue — the sweetest pain,  
The deepest passion, love without a stain,  
A high and holy yearning that had lain  
Buried, did come in a white company,  
In tremulous procession, unto me.  
For an immortal moment I was free  
O' the flesh, and leaped in spirit and was  
strong  
With beauty, shaken by magic of that song.

## THE WAYS RETURN

**M**ANY the ways that man must fare,  
The roads run up and down ;  
Some thrid the country hillsides fair,  
Some slink within the town.

Some tortuous are and hard to keep,  
But others slip along  
Where gardens grow and fountains leap  
And speech is sweet, and song.

Some stretch away 'midst alien sights,  
'Midst strange, far-lying things ;  
Others be near the native lights,  
Nor reck of journeyings.

And oh, the lingering, long quest,  
The stumblings, triumphs, pain,  
The while man fares it east and west  
Ere he return again.

But one boon, one, is sure to be,  
How far soe'er he roam :  
At last the wandering ways agree,  
At last they lead him home.

## THE ELEMENTAL JOYS

THE elemental joys ! How far away  
And dim they seem, amidst the modern fret ;  
The tumultuous probings, and the eyes tear-wet ;  
The dark forever treading on the day !  
The elemental joys ! And yet,

Behold them close at hand ! The open sky,  
And all her sweep and thrill ; the open fire,  
Sleeking the body to its heart's desire ;  
The white hands of the chosen home-mate —why,  
They all are goodly-nigh,

Nor is death any greedier than of old:  
So, comrades, let us foot it free and bold,  
Win song and love and solace like a boy's —  
The elemental joys !



## THE NORTH LIGHT

THE ARTIST SPEAKS

**G**IVE me the room with a clear north light  
To paint my pictures in ;  
For how may the artist paint aright,  
And meed eternal win,

Unless the sun come temperately  
Through the roof there, overhead ?  
Yea, the clear north light is the light for me,  
As the dark is for the dead !

If I let the fervid south fierce shine  
On the creatures of my brush,  
They are passion-warped, for the heat, like wine,  
Will set my blood a-rush ;

Whereas, the artist, like God on high,  
Must work in no hot whim ;  
Aroused, yet calm, with a steady eye,  
While the centuries gaze at him.

There is love that lasts and a patience long  
In his forms and colors sure ;  
And the light he needs, that he go not wrong,  
Is a high light, sane and pure.

When the great Thought comes and the gleam of  
Power,  
There is warmth divine in his soul ;  
But the labor drugs him hour by hour  
And far away is the goal ;

So, for mastery, and the deed well done,  
He must cleanse his sight of all  
The quick distempers bred in the sun  
That take weak men in thrall.

*The  
North Light*

Must nurse the spark and the vision swift  
In the chastened light of the sky ;  
That the work, though slow, have a heavenward  
lift,  
That the Beauty may not die.

In the place where the pictures have their birth  
Give me a north light clear,  
With more of God and less of earth  
In the quiet atmosphere.

## LIGHT AND SHADE

**T**HIS one knows joy, and says : “ Ah,  
Life is sweet ! ”

And sorrow this one : “ Nay, ’tis drowned in  
tears.”

Meanwhile, the picture is made all complete

By God, great Chiaroscurist of the years,  
Who uses light and shade, and in whose thought  
The whole is clearly limned and calmly sought.



## CHILD-PLAY

**A**S children play with toys,  
So men with hopes and fancies :  
The little ones with romp and noise  
Build card-frail, gold romances ;  
Their elders through the perilous years  
Build dreams — and wake to toil and tears.

But, old or young the same,  
The glittering baubles please them ;  
And be it fame or game,  
These make-believes release them  
From iron circumstance, from drear  
Realities that choke them here.

## LIFE

**F**RRIENDLY it stands, yon Inn upon the plain,  
And keen the lamps burn through the cryptic  
night.

How jocund sound the voices, and how bright  
The cheer ! how warm the housing from the rain !

The traveller, once arrived, forgets the long,  
Blank journey leading thither ; all the dim,  
Mysterious days are nothing now to him,  
Seated amidst the food and wine and song.

But when, the reckoning paid, his comrades fled,  
He steps upon the road and moves away,  
His soul is puzzled sore — he cannot say  
What Inn it was, or by whom tenanted.

## THE ETERNAL FEMININE

**F**OREVER shall she beckon. Men may prate  
Of custom, fashion, change, — still doth she  
call

To high endeavor ; dreams begotten thence  
Turn with the day to deeds chivalric ; vows  
Are pledged eternally before this shrine  
Whose taper-lights are stars, whose choristers  
Are souls bowed down with Beauty. Years on  
years

But dim the garments of the worshippers,  
The light, the lure, are constant. All too brief  
Is Time wherein to follow from afar  
The Way of Wonder leading down to Love.  
Look, at the alley-end she sways and smiles,  
Fresh as a morn-birth, fair as paradise,—  
Yet ancient as the moaning of the sea !

## A WESTERN SCENE

**T**HE land puts on a haggard look ;  
For branchless boles of trees uprise  
In straggling groups, in tragic wise,  
Black, weather-beaten, God-forsook.

Upon the plain, in high relief  
Against wide heaven, you may see  
Them flaunt spectacular misery,  
Stamping a summer scene with grief.

Yet somehow in the long ago  
Blossomed and bloomed an Eden-show  
Of beauty here — where now is this  
Bleak picture of a wilderness ?

## THE MODERN SAINT

NO monkish garb he wears, no beads he tells,  
Nor is immured in walls remote from strife.  
But from his heart deep mercy ever wells ;  
He looks humanely forth on human life.

In place of missals or of altar dreams,  
He cons the passionate book of deeds and days ;  
Striving to cast the comforting sweet beams  
Of charity on dark and noisome ways.

Not hedged about by sacerdotal rule,  
He walks a fellow of the scarred and weak.  
Liberal and wise his gifts ; he goes to school  
To Justice ; and he turns the other cheek.

He looks not holy ; simple is his belief ;  
His creed for mystic visions do not scan ;  
His face shows lines cut there by others' grief,  
And in his eyes is love of brother-man.

Not self nor self-salvation is his care ;  
He yearns to make the world a sunnier clime  
To live in ; and his mission everywhere  
Is strangely like to Christ's in olden time.

No mediæval mystery, no crowned,  
Dim figure, halo-ringed, uncanny bright.  
A modern saint : a man who treads earth's ground,  
And ministers to men with all his might.

## SEALED ORDERS

**W**E bear sealed orders o'er Life's weltered sea,  
Our haven dim and far ;  
We can but man the helm right cheerily,  
Steer by the brightest star,

And hope that when at last the Great Command  
Is read, we then may hear  
Our anchor song, and see the longed-for land  
Lie, known and very near.

## BLACK OAKS

THE leaves of the black oak linger the  
winter through

In the woods of the wide Northwest ; leech-  
like they cling

To the branch, and they nowise yield to  
blight and snow,

Presences dun and mystic ; oft is the view

Framed in their subtle richness ; oft they ring

Horizons else remote as the Long Ago.

The leaves of the black oak bide, and for me  
their grace

Has a conjuring touch of home, of a dear lost  
place ;

I forget the plains, I behold New England's face.

## HAYING-TIME

**I**N the meadows the men are haying :  
I can hear the creak of the cart,  
I can see the play of the muscles,  
And the honest sweat outstart.

But the blue sky, calm and ample,  
With tranquil speech doth say :  
“ Why sweat, O ye tiny toilers,  
When your work is for a day ? ”



## CHANGELESS

**L**OVE hath full many semblances : Now this  
Fair face doth lure, now yonder smile re-  
makes

A sorry world ; now at a mad-cap kiss  
We build unstable dreams : the vision takes  
A myriad forms, and hath the charm thereof. —  
But ever, in the background, soareth Love,  
One deathless creature poised beyond, above !

“ IN SPEAKING OF THE LITTLE ONES  
WE LOVE ”

**I**N speaking of the little ones we love  
Our souls grow warm and tender : Young-of-  
Years

So helpless seems, yet valiant, trusting all  
It sees, and putting faith in the Unseen ;  
Deeming the whole cold-hearted outer world  
A mother-embrace, a bosom for its sleep.

We men are little ones before high God :  
In pain, in sickness, and in moods that yearn  
For consolation, or when we intrust  
Our pigmy bodies to their night-still beds,  
The spirit feels its youth and feebleness  
And turns like any weak, perplexèd child  
Toward home, toward father, mother, and the  
things  
Indwelling, known of old, and longed for still,  
'Midst infinite barrenness and all unrest.

We men are little ones before high God :  
The boasts of brain, the passions of the mind  
Are nothing, set beside the one brief hour  
Of faith re-born, calm dreams, and utter love.

## GOSPELS

**T**WO Gospels there are of the years  
That haunt men, and follow them after :  
And one is the Gospel of tears,  
The other the Gospel of laughter.

The Gospel of laughter is good,  
For it sweetens the gall of our sorrow ;  
Therethrough is slow anguish withstood  
And the spirit trussed up for the morrow.

The Gospel of tears is divine,  
For it makes us draw closer together,  
And shows us the beacon and sign  
Of souls, in Life's stormiest weather.

Two Gospels there are of the years,  
Rich-crowning our grief and our pleasure :  
The Gospel of laughter, of tears,  
With meanings that man may not measure.

## TRAVEL

**I** SIT in mine house at ease,  
Moving nor foot nor hand ;  
Yet sail through unchartered seas  
And wander from land to land.

And though I may travel far,  
It is always well with me ;  
I can come from an outmost star  
At a touch, at a call from thee.

# THE QUEST OF SUMMER

## I

I HAD been waiting long  
For its coming,  
For the time of bird-song  
And the humming  
Of the bees and the smell of May grass,  
Till it seemed that the winter sleep never would pass  
To the buoyant bright waking of summer,  
Sweet comer,  
With the mood of a love-plighted lass.

But it came,  
In a garment of sensitive flame  
In the west, and a royal blue sky overhead,  
With exuberant breath and the bloom of all things  
Having wonders and wings,  
Being risen elate from the dead.  
Yea, it came with a flush  
Of pied flowers, and a turbulent rush  
Of spring-loosened waters, and an odorous hush  
At nightfall, — and then I was glad  
With the gladness of one who for militant months  
has been sad.

Then for days,  
In the warm noon haze,  
In the freshness of morning or spirit-still mood of  
the night,  
My delight  
Was wordless and deep, was a benison straight  
from my God ;

*The Quest  
of Summer*

For the sky and the sod  
Were marvels, and living a joy, and dun winter a  
myth ;

But therewith  
Crept a change, — no swift spasm of nature, no  
death  
Of brightness and beauty, but soberer drawing of  
breath

That follows on rapture ; no pall  
Of sorrow, but splendid and bounteous Fall,  
Whose veil is soft silver, who heralds a festival  
Of harvests and hopes and desires,

Around whose fires  
Dance satyrs and nymphs and young Bacchus the  
jocund, whose shapes  
Are purply with time-mists and grapes.

Then I knew  
How September's most opulent blue  
Must merge in October's calm gold,  
As ever of old ;  
A month thorough-thrilled with the prescience of  
ultimate pain ;

That again  
Would follow November wind-writhen and sere,  
Then winter, a wild-mannered fere.

So I said : " I will hasten from here,  
I will win to what climes are more winsome and  
warm,

Where skyey beatitudes are, and no storm  
May startle them out of their passionless norm  
Of peace ;

Where release  
From weathers shall last through each day of the *The Quest*  
seven, *of Summer*  
So long as below is the earth and above is the  
heaven."

So when the season came of hooded skies,  
Of wailing voices and of cheerless ways,  
I ventured forth upon this sole emprise,  
Nor saw my mother-land for many days.

## II

Soft slumbrous breathings of the enchanted noon  
That drift and sift across the lapsed lagoon ;  
The hush of heat, and for a constant tune  
The languid silver swash of Southern seas.

The cocoa palms seem tranced upon the air  
With cassia odorous ; all bright and bare  
Of sails the sea ; the coral reefs gleam fair  
Along the beach, and boom the big swart bees.

Here in this island-haunt a soul may rest  
Like to a child upon the mother-breast,  
Dreaming no dream that is not smooth and blest,  
Nor waking save to solaces as dear.

Night follows noon, and then each star above  
Looms like a moon and pulses life and love ;  
The waters moan as moans a rapt white dove,  
And whilom water-fowls make clamor clear.

*The Quest  
of Summer*    How long have I been here ? Ah, who can tell ?  
The hours are but estrays of Time — no bell  
Tinkles to warn the islanders ; but well  
They know the day-dawn : It was yesteryear,

Perchance, or yesterday ; it matters not,  
There are no hounding cares to make a blot  
Upon Life's face, to rouse the tranced spot  
Into unease and bodings fraught with fear.

How can I e'er be sad, so bathed in bliss ?  
Here is unceasing summer ; here, I wis,  
One need but lie and watch the sky-line kiss  
The waves, and pluck the poppy in the sand.

Unceasing summer, aye ; . . and far from  
home !

How many countless leagues across the foam  
The sail-sick mariner must rock and roam  
Before he sight the long-witholden land !

And there are icy wind and barren snow,  
And here all tropic splendors bloom and blow ;  
Then who would leave it, nor be loth to go  
From pleasance such to breast a wintry clime ?

Lo, for the asking, lemons, mangoes, milk,  
And berries, shedding fragrance ; soft as silk  
The bed whereon I lie, the breezes ilk  
That fan my face, the bath at morning-time.





Below, a myriad colors on the earth,  
Around, a shifting miracle, a birth  
Of beauty new, and ever wonder-worth ;  
Above, the great deep sapphire of the sky.

*The Quest  
of Summer*

It were a marvel did a man regret  
Within this June eternal : ah, but yet  
I feel mine eyes north-gazing, sometimes wet.  
Mayhap it is mere surfeit of delight,

Or is it love and longing for the lost  
Keen raptures of a country tempest-tossed,  
By all the savageries of nature crossed  
And crowned with cold, as kings with circlets  
bright ?

Nay, ask me not ; but I must now away,  
Seeking my native land, as wanderers may,  
Homesick, and taught by every flawless day  
How better than all else the old-time things.

I must away — so fetch my lithe canoe  
To dare the foam and tread the sea-halls blue.  
A swift farewell, O Isle of Dreams, to you,  
O Southern Cross, see where in heaven it  
swings.

III

I came with the winds and the weather  
To the well-belovèd place,  
And I recked not a rose-worth whether  
Sere winter had showed his face

*The Quest  
of Summer*

On the sea and the land,  
In the icy air,  
Or whether the year was bland and fair :  
All weather was seemly weather,  
Because it was homelike there.  
In those sunshine isles of the Southern sea  
The old keen joyance had slipt from me,  
I sated soon of the ceaseless boon  
Of drowsy days by the still lagoon.

But now my thoughts were interblent with birds  
And blandishments of morning ; all the land  
Was lovely past the putting it in words,  
Yet changeful as a maid who gives her hand,  
But will not do it wantonly, for fear  
It make her seem less dear.

So the secret was won forever,  
And I hugged it tight to my breast :  
How the life all-summered, never  
Knows passion nor joy's behest.

How the spring change wakes to rapture  
The spirit so long asleep,  
And the May month seems to capture  
A bliss that is twofold deep

When it follows hard on a sullen time  
Of cheerless fields and of limping rhyme,  
With a lyric thrill and a burst sublime.

So my quest of summer was over ;  
The time of corn and of clover,  
Of robin and rose and radiant hours,  
Came to my door as a welcome guest,  
Welcome with birds and flowers,  
And I feasted fine in the warmth and scent ;  
But when 'twas o'er I was well content,  
Facing the sober fall with zest ;  
Nor winter froze  
Could evermore  
Be aught but a rough-wayed friend to me, —  
A friend who had preached high-heartedly  
Courage, faith in the good-to-be.

For the sweetest of all seasons  
Is that which follows pain,  
And the best of winter's reasons  
Is the summer here again.

## ON THE LINE

A LITTLE picture hung — its peaceful  
stretch  
Of sunny field ; its glimpse of shady lane  
Wherein the cattle, stragglers ponderous,  
Made leisurely advance ; its distant hills  
That left the background dreamy, and above,  
Beyond, the summer sky white-flecked with  
cloud, —  
Dulled down and killed because on either side  
Were canvases of other themes and tones.  
The eye, confused by these so variant thoughts,  
Must wander helplessly, nor stay to judge  
The patient artist's meaning ; so the small  
And modest picture missed its due effect.

'Twas bought by one who had the seeing soul.  
One day he showed it me within a room  
Where all was harmonized to suit its mood.  
I found it hard to think my memory  
Had played me false, so foully disesteemed  
The treasure that mine eyes must now behold :  
The wealth of coloring, the breadth and range,  
The worship breathing through and under all.

'Tis thus with men. Alive, they jostle past,  
Shoulder to shoulder with some fellow-man  
Who draws our gaze away. We hardly know  
If they be gods or ghosts, so carelessly  
We sense their presence. Death lifts up his hand  
And beckons once ; they follow, leave the crowd.

We straight collect their words and scattered *On the Line*  
deeds,  
Abstract our thoughts from off the busy world,  
And study all that went to make them rare,  
Until they stand disburdened and declared.  
Then, next, we garnish up a pedestal,  
Unused before, and lift their image high  
For wise posterity in after-time  
To humbly pause and view them, stern in stone.

## CLEAR HEAVENS

THE sky is wind-swept, and the golden air,  
Rain-washed, is crystal-clear and keen to  
breathe.

The hills since yesterday have shaken off  
Their dim aloofness, and uprise so near,  
Clean cut and purple 'gainst the brow of morn,  
They startle you. There is a brilliancy  
Set like a seal on earth and heaven ; it seems  
As if all Nature made her ready for  
Some festival, some august guest to come  
And tarry for a day. Some joy-to-be  
Haunts in the field, inhabits all the woods,  
And thrids the blue ; nor e'en night's darker  
mood

Dispels the strong illusion : since the stars  
Shine brighter than their wont, and breezes blow  
The message, " Patience ; it will all come true."

## TWO BARDS

A BARD who wrote in staves  
Once made a heathen hymn.  
It had this stern refrain,  
That moved as though in pain :  
“ The under-glimpse of graves  
Makes the sea grim.”

A south-land singer sung  
With happy heart and free.  
The living, not the dead,  
He dealt with, and he said :  
“ The world is glad and young,  
And good to me.”

And ever since, mankind  
Is shuttled back and forth  
Between these singers twain  
Of glad and sad refrain : —  
The southland warm and kind,  
The bitter north.

## PLAINT OF THE PINE

I FOUND a pine that shot its solemn bole  
Twice fifty feet against the summer sky  
From out a sunless gorge ; and sad of soul  
It seemed, until I sought to question why ;  
Whereat the tree moaned darkly — made this  
strange reply :

“ I am troubled betimes, I am sad in my sleep,  
Foreboding the day I shall stagger and leap  
And tremble through tempests o’er seas that are  
deep.

“ They will fashion me forth for a ship ; they will  
make  
My stature and girth but a mock ; they will break  
My branches and rend me for merchanting’s  
sake.

“ Eternal unease shall be portioned to me,  
A creature firm rooted and fain so to be, —  
Eternal unease on the shifting, loud sea.

“ For each to his nature ; and mine is to grow  
Tall, sombre, and steadfast, and gravely a-row  
With brothers as grave, while the centuries go.

“ I am troubled betimes, I am sorely oppressed,  
As I ponder and dream on my mother-earth’s  
breast,  
With a fear of the ocean, that knoweth not rest.”



## TRAGEDIES

**T**WO kinds there are : the one theatric, bold,  
A murder, maybe, horrible to see,  
Lives lost by fire or flood, and bodies cold  
That speak some tale of awful agony ;

The other, mumming 'neath a milder name :  
A human soul that as the days go by  
Sinks deeper down into some pit of shame,  
Yet knows the stars shine silvery and high.

## FLASHES

A FLASH of the lightning keen!  
And io! we know that, miles on miles,  
The dim, lost land is lying green.

It brims our heart with joy, the whiles,  
To see that through the thick night-screen  
Full many a meadow smiles and smiles.

A flash from the poet's brain!  
The meaning of the many years,  
That mazeful seemed, grows very plain ;  
The level lands of gloom and tears  
Hint holy heights, turn bright again ;  
The night a transient thing appears.

## LAUREL

**A** LONG the road in the month of June,  
With all the roses in their prime,  
The laurel blooms and hears the tune  
Of all the birds, for 'tis their time  
Of fullest, fairest singing.

And no man meets awake, a-dream,  
A daintier pink on lady-cheek  
Than paints those clustered cups that seem  
Like nuns demure and over-meek,  
So close together clinging.

Some flowers are for city walks,  
And some o'er love's light lattice climb ;  
And some are noisome on their stalks,  
While others scent the summer time  
In quiet garden closes.

But most of all, methinks, I love  
Along some road of solitude  
To see the laurel, flower of  
A simpler yet a sweeter mood  
Than any mood of roses!

## MARY MAGDALEN

**A**T dawn she sought the Saviour slain,  
To kiss the spot where he had lain  
And weep warm tears, like Spring-time rain ;

When lo! there stood, unstained of death,  
A man that spake with slow, sweet breath ;  
And “ Master ! ” Mary answereth.

From out the far and fragrant years,  
How sweeter than the songs of seers  
That tender offering of tears !

## THE QUEST OF SUMMER

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For its coming,  
For the time of bird-song  
And the humming  
Of the bees and the smell of May grass,  
Till it seemed that the winter sleep never would pass  
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Sweet comer,  
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But it came,  
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In the west, and a royal blue sky overhead,  
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Keen raptures of a country tempest-tossed,  
By all the savageries of nature crossed  
And crowned with cold, as kings with circlets  
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Homesick, and taught by every flawless day  
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A friend who had preached high-heartedly  
Courage, faith in the good-to-be.

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Wherein the cattle, stragglers ponderous,  
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Shoulder to shoulder with some fellow-man  
Who draws our gaze away. We hardly know  
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We sense their presence. Death lifts up his hand  
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Some festival, some august guest to come  
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From out a sunless gorge ; and sad of soul  
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Foreboding the day I shall stagger and leap  
And tremble through tempests o’er seas that are  
deep.

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make  
My stature and girth but a mock ; they will break  
My branches and rend me for merchanting’s  
sake.

“ Eternal unease shall be portioned to me,  
A creature firm rooted and fain so to be, —  
Eternal unease on the shifting, loud sea.

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Tall, sombre, and steadfast, and gravely a-row  
With brothers as grave, while the centuries go.

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breast,  
With a fear of the ocean, that knoweth not rest.”



## TRAGEDIES

**T**WO kinds there are : the one theatric, bold,  
A murder, maybe, horrible to see,  
Lives lost by fire or flood, and bodies cold  
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A human soul that as the days go by  
Sinks deeper down into some pit of shame,  
Yet knows the stars shine silvery and high.

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**A** FLASH of the lightning keen!  
And lo! we know that, miles on miles,  
The dim, lost land is lying green.

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Full many a meadow smiles and smiles.

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That mazeful seemed, grows very plain ;  
The level lands of gloom and tears  
Hint holy heights, turn bright again ;  
The night a transient thing appears.

## LAUREL

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With all the roses in their prime,  
The laurel blooms and hears the tune  
Of all the birds, for 'tis their time  
Of fullest, fairest singing.

And no man meets awake, a-dream,  
A daintier pink on lady-cheek  
Than paints those clustered cups that seem  
Like nuns demure and over-meek,  
So close together clinging.

Some flowers are for city walks,  
And some o'er love's light lattice climb ;  
And some are noisome on their stalks,  
While others scent the summer time  
In quiet garden closes.

But most of all, methinks, I love  
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A simpler yet a sweeter mood  
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**A**T dawn she sought the Saviour slain,  
To kiss the spot where he had lain  
And weep warm tears, like Spring-time rain ;

When lo! there stood, unstained of death,  
A man that spake with slow, sweet breath ;  
And “ Master ! ” Mary answereth.

From out the far and fragrant years,  
How sweeter than the songs of seers  
That tender offering of tears !

So was it done : one awful day and night  
(Uncalendared within that dateless land)  
The liquid flame licked down, and ceasing, left  
Ashes and bones and formless waste, wherefrom  
The some-time splendor of a world had been.  
And he, the moon-man, whom the children know,  
The childlike hermit of this elder race,  
Was left alone.

*A Legend of  
the Moon*

And now a bleak despair  
And sorrow nipped his blood, and he was fain  
To perish by his cave. But erst at eve  
He stood within a strange and windless plain  
And with lack-lustre gaze beheld where shone  
Through trackless leagues of space the clustered  
lights  
Of constellations, idly looked upon  
Fixed stars of vibrant flickerings, did mark  
The changeless glow of planets in their path,  
Argent or gold or ruddy-faced like Mars :  
And saw, or deemed he saw, or dreamed he saw,  
A shape, that moved upon one orb, the earth,  
A silver cirque that lit the nether sky.  
Whereat a tremor shook his spirit lax,  
And it grew tense : his soul was hung upon  
That shifting thing, that blot against a star,  
Until he knew it for a mortal man  
And wept, and cried aloud, to think that he  
Was less companionless.

Thereafter, though  
His lot was gruesome and his sorrows lead  
Against his heart, a kind of pensive calm

*A Legend of  
the Moon*

Settled within him as he watched our orb  
Thro' years and sweeping cycles, e'en to Now.  
Nor had he will to die, because of this  
Weird watch and ward, this brooding over us.  
Nay, once he even smiled a moment's space,  
Beholding how a deed of charity  
Was done a lonesome soul : and once his eyes  
Looked dreamy in their sockets gaunt, because  
An earth-poet's fancy dubbed yon yellow ball  
*An octoroan beside those slim white girls,*  
*The stars.* But most his mood set sorrowward,  
And most his sighs were like the homeless wind  
That moans about the gables in the night.  
Sleep does not visit him from month to month :  
Mandrake nor poppy may not lure his eyes  
From earthward quest ; awake and sad, he seems  
To yearn within his poised and dizzy haunt  
For easement of the warning in his mind  
To us of earth, lest we let Love be lost  
— That crystal candle 'midst the bogs of hate  
And guile and lack-of-Love and lusts untamed —  
As did his kindred, so their sorry case  
Be ours : remembering that the self-same gods  
Shaped him and us and all.

Be such his thoughts  
Or no, he keeps his vigil, and his front  
Looks dumbly down, — while I upgaze at him  
And wonder if his brain be not restraint  
With horrid weight of memory. Shall he find  
A final solace for a fate forlorn,  
And meet with us upon some higher sphere  
To commerce once again with human kind

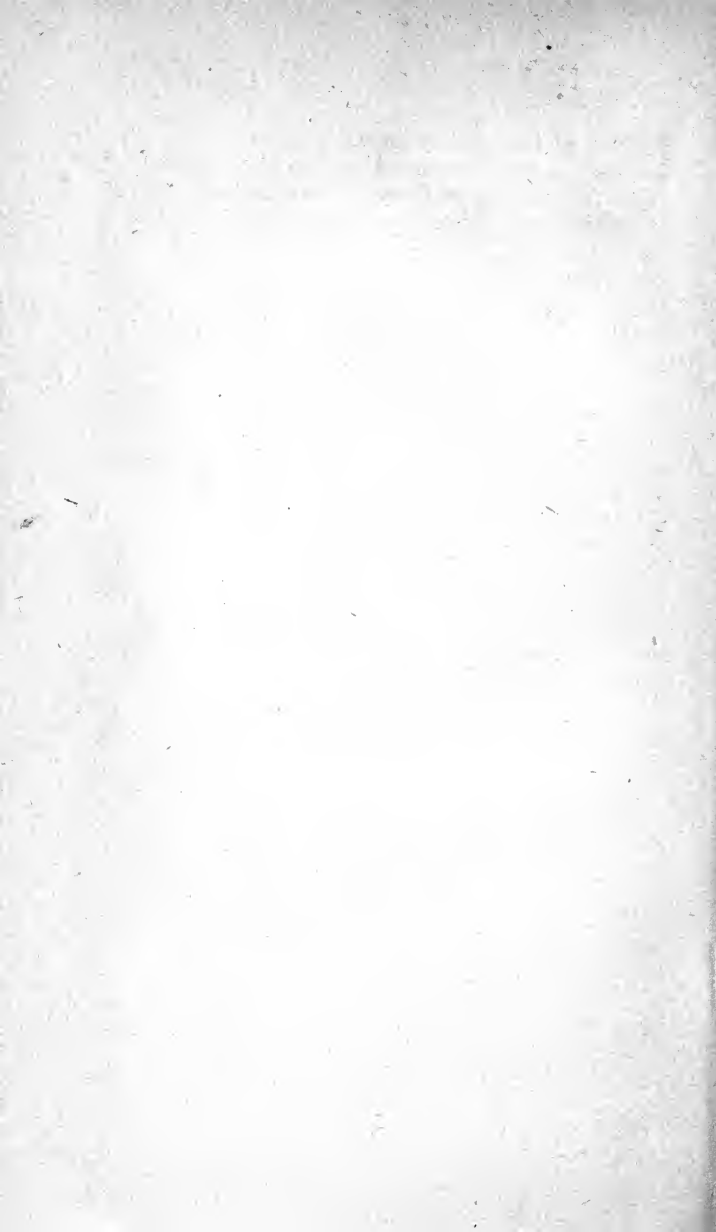
By touch of hand and mouth and interchange  
Of words, a long withholden boon to him?  
So far the moon has whispered : here she stays  
Her silver secrets, leaves me unappeased.

*A Legend of  
the Moon*

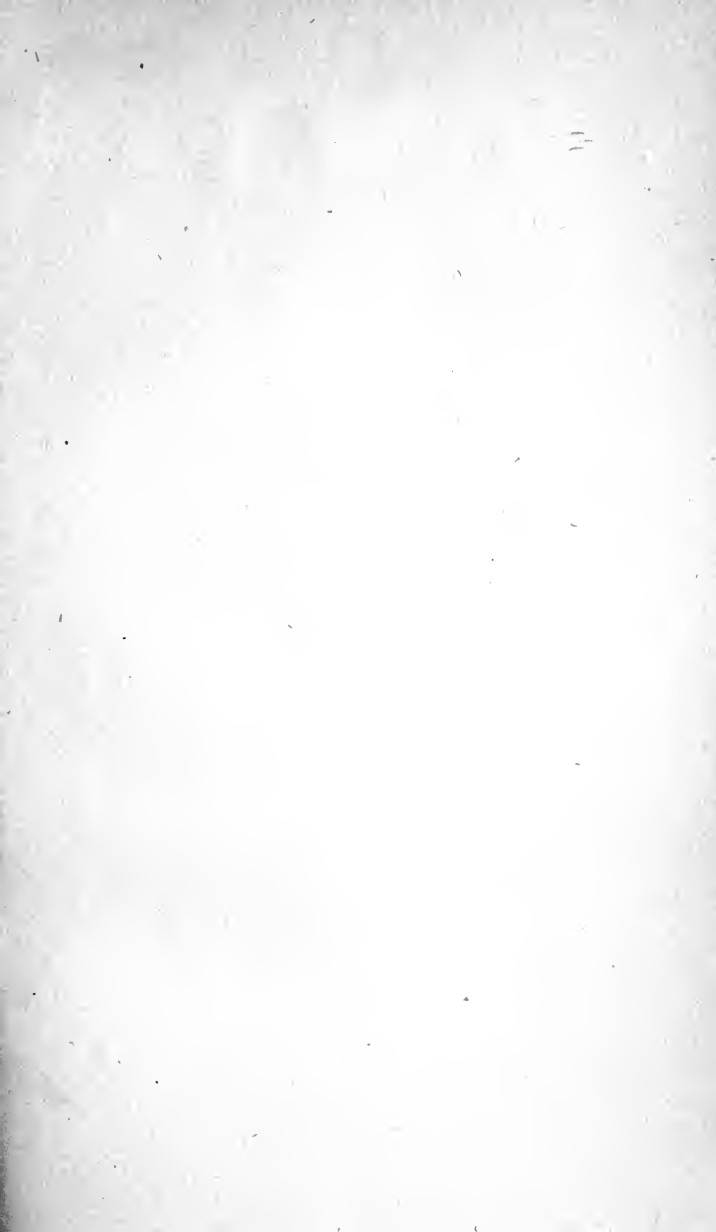
Along came Science in a surly mood  
Of introspection, harked awhile, nor spake,  
Frowned ominously, and then at length found  
speech,

That made but tatters of my peopled moon,  
The mid-air ship that bore my single fleece  
Of story. 'Tis a lie, quoth he, for ne'er  
*Since chaos was there breath on yonder orb  
Nor moving wight, nor sound of speech nor song  
To make the mountains merry and the plains  
Vital and thick with voices : None but babes  
And sucklings can be fooled with such a myth.*  
Whereat mine answer : *Men are children still,  
And love their legends and their wonder-tales.*  
*Moreover, came the record not from heaven,  
From very heaven upon a cloudless night ?  
So, Science, leave me to my conjuring  
Of moons and mortals and of olden days.*









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